Here begynneth the boke called the example of vertu.

Tabula libri

¶ Fyrste a prologue.

¶ How youth mette with discrecyon in a medowe in his dreme & was reformed by her prouerbes ca.i.

¶ How youth with discrecyon sayled ouer the daunge rous passage of vayne glorye and arryued in a fayre Ilonde longynge to foure ladyes named Hardynes/ Sapyence/fortune/& nature. ca.ii.

¶ Of the meruaylous palays of fortune ca.iii.

¶ Of the triumphaunt estate of hardynes. ca.iiii.

¶ Of the glorykyed towre of sapyence. ca.v.

¶ Of the stronge operacyons of nature ca.vi

¶ How these foure ladyes pleeded at the barre before Iustyce whiche of theym was mooste profytable vn- to mankynde & of the Iugement of Iustyce.ca. vii.

¶ How after the Iugement of Iustyce/Sapyence cō maunded Discrecōn to lede youth to marye with clen nes the kynge of loues doughter. ca.viii.

¶ How youth by the waye mette w̄ lechery rydynge on a gote and pryde maned with couetyse on an oly- phantes backe in a fayre castell/ & how by the ayde of

dyſcrecyon he dyde withſtande theyr tempꝛtacõn and how he mette with ſapience in the maſe of wozdely be ſynes. capitulo.ix.

¶How Sapyence & dyſcrecyon ledde youth ouer the naꝛowe bꝛydge of vanyte of the wozlde to the palays of ỹ kynge of loue & of his meruaylous appaꝛeyl.ca.x

¶How ſapyence pꝛeſented youth to the kynge of loue foꝛ to mary Clennes his doughter & how he befoꝛe ỹ maryage dyde fyght and diſcomfyte the dꝛagon with thꝛe hedys. capitulo.xi.

¶How after the diſconfyture of the ſayd dꝛagon he well growen in age was receyued with a fayre com⁹ pany of ladyes and was named vertu & with all Joye bꝛought to the palays of the kynge of loue. ca.xii.

¶Of the maryage of vertu & clennes & of ỹ celeſtyal feſte how after the maryage an aungell ſhewed vnto theym hell/& of the dyuyſyons of hell. ca.xiii.

¶How vertu cleymed the enheꝛytaunce longynge to Clennes his wyfe/ & how many aungelles & ſayntes bꝛought theym to heuen/ & how heuen is enteyled to Vertu and to Clennes & to all theym that loue them & folowe & pꝛocede in theyr ſteppes: capitulo.xiiii.

¶ This boke called the example of vertue was made and compyled by Stephyn hawys one of the gromes of the moost honorable chaumber of oure soueraygne lorde kynge Henry the. vii. the. xix. yere of his moost noble reygne / and by hym presented to our sayd soue rayne lorde chappyrred & marked after this table here before sette.

¶ The prologe.

¶ Whan I aduert in my remembraunce
The famous draughtes of poetes eloquent
Whiche theyr myndes dyd well enhaunce
Bokes to contryue that were expedyent
To be remembred without impedyment
For the profyte of humanyte
This was the custume of antyquyte.

I now symple and moost rude
And naked in depured eloquence
For dulnes rethorike doth exclude
Wherfore in makynge I lake intellygence
Also consyderynge my grete neglygence
It fereth me sore for to endyte
But at auenture I wyll now wryte.

As very blynde in the poetys art
For I therof can no thynge skyll
Wherfore I lay it all a part
But somwhat accordynge to my wyll
I wyll now wryte for to fulfyll

Saynt Powles wordes and true lentement
All that is wryten is to oure document

O prudent Gower in langage pure
Without corrupcyon moost facundyous
O noble Chaucer euer moost sure
Of frutfull lentence ryght delycyous
O vertuous Lydgat moche lentencyous
Unto you all I do me excuse
Though I your commynge do now vse

Explicit prologus.

Capitulum primū

IN Septembre in fallynge of the leffe
Whan phebus made his declynacyon
And all the whete gadred was in the sheffe
By radyaunt hete and operacyon
Whan the vyrgyn had full domynacyon
And Dyane entred was one degre
In to the lygne of Gemyne

Whan the golden sterres clere were splendent
In the firmament puryfyed clere as crystall
By imperyall course without incombrement
As Juppyter and Mars that be celestyall
With Saturne and Mercury that wer supernall
Myxt with venus that was not retrograte
That caused me to be well fortunate

In a slombrynge slepe with slouth oppressit
As I in my naked bedde was leyd
Thynkynge all nyght to take my rest
Morpleus to me than made abreyd
And in my dreme me thought he sayd
Come walke with me in a medowe amerous
Depeynted with floures that be delycyous

I walked with hym into a place
Where that there grue many a fayre floure
With Joye replete and full of solace
And the trees dystyllynge redolent lycoure
Moze sweter fer than the Aprell shour
And tary I dyd there by longe space
Tyll that I saw before my face

A ryght fayre lady of myddell stature
And also enduyd with grete vertue
Her apparell was set with perlys pure
Whose beaute alway dyd renue
To me she sayd and ye wyll extue
All wyldnes I wyll be your guyde
That ye to fraylte shall not slyde.

Unto her I answerde o lady glorious
I pray you tell me what is your name
For ye seeme to be right precious
And I am yonge and sore to blame
Of vyces full and in vertue lame
But I wyll be ruled now by your pleasure
So that your order be made by mesure

Eclepyd I am shesayd discrecyon
And yf ye wyll be ruled by me
Ye shall haue Ioye without reprehencyon
And neuer fall in to fragylyte
Youth lackynge me it is grete pyte
For in what place I am exyled
They be with synne right oft defyled

It longeth euer vnto my properte
Youth to gyue courage for to lerne
I wyll not medle with no duplycyte
But faythfulnes I wyll discerne
And brynge thy soule to blesse eterne
By wyse example and morall doctryne
For youth hauynge to me is a good syne

Forsake also all euyll company
And be founde true in worde and dede
Remembre that this worlde is transytory
After thy desert shall be thy mede
Loue god alway and eke hym drede
And for no mannes pleasure be thyn owne foo
Gyue theym fayre wordes and lete theym goo

Be to thy kynge euer true subgete
As thou sholdest be by ryght and reason
Lete thy herte lowely on hym be sete
Without ony spot of euyll treason
And be obedyent at euery season
Unto his grace without rebellyon
That thou with trouth may be companyon

Loue neuer vnloued for that is payne
Whyle that thou lyuest of that beware
Loue as thou seest the loued agayne
Or elles it wyll torne the to care
Be neuer taken in that fast snare
Proue or thou loue that is moost sure
And than thou in doubte shalt not endure.

Beware byleue no flaterynge tonge
For flaterers be moost dysseyuable
Though that they company with the longe
Yet at the ende they wyll be baryable
For they by reason are not fauorable
But euermore fals and double
And with theyr tonges cause of grete trouble

This brytell worlde ay full of bytternes
Alway turnynge lyke to a ball
No man in it can haue no lykernes
For whan he clymmeth he hath a fall
O wauerynge shadowe bytter as gall
O fatall welth full soone at ende
Though thou ryght hy do oft allende

Whan she to me had made relacyon
Of all these prouerbes by good conclusyon
She gaue to me an Informacyon
For to deprsyue all yll abusyon
And to consydre the grete derysyon
Whiche is in youth that may not se
No thynge apprropred to his prosperyte

Forth than we went to an hauen syde
Wher was a shyp lyenge at rode
Caryenge after the wynde and tyde
And with moche spyces ryght well lode
Upon it lokynge we longe abode
Tyll colus with blastes began to rore
Than we her aborded with payne ryght sore

This water eclyped was bayneglory
Euer with peopardy and tempestyous
And the shyp called was ryght truly
The vessell of the passage daungerous
The wawys were hyghe and gretly troublous
The captayn called was good comfort
And the sterysman fayre pasport

¶ Capitulum.ii.

Longe were we dryuen with wynde & weder
Tyll we arryued in a fayre Islonde
Wher was a boote tyed with a teeder
Of merueylous wood as I understonde
Precyous stones ley vpon the sond
And poynted dyamondes greue on the rockes
And corall also by ryght hyghe stockes

Amased I was for to beholde
The precyous stones vnder my fete
And the erth glysterynge of golde
With floures fayre of odour swete
Dame dyscrecyon I dyd than grete
Prayynge her to me to make relacyon
Who of this Ilonde hath domynacyon

She sayd foure ladyes in vertue excellent
Of whiche the eldest is dame nature
That dayly fourmeth after her entent
Euery beest and lyuynge creature
Both foule and fayre and also pure
All that dependynge in her ordynaunce
Where that she fauoureth there is grete pleasaunce

The seconde is called dame fortune
Ayenst whome can be no resystence
For she doth sette the strynges in tune
Of euery persone by her magnyfycence
Whan they sound best by good experyence
She wyll theym loose and let theym slyp
Caulynge theym fall by her turnynge tryp

The thyrde called is dame hardynes
That often rulyth by her cheualry
She is ryght stowt and of grete prowes
And the captayn of a lusty company
And ruleth theym euer full hardely
And to gete honour and worldely treasure
She putteth her oft in auenture

¶ The fourth is wyledome a lady bryght
Whiche is my syster as ye shall se
Whom I do loue with all my myght
For she enclyneth euer to benygnyte
And medeleth not with fraude nor subtylyte
But maketh many noble clerkes
And ruleth theym in all theyr werkes

¶ They dwell all in a fayre castell
Belyde a ryuer moche depe and clere
And be expert in keytys manuell
That vnto theym can be no peere
Of erthely persone that lyueth here
For they be so fayre and wounderous
That theym to se it is solacyous.

¶ Longe haue they trauerst gretly in the lawe
Whiche of theym sholde haue the preemynence
And none of them theyr cause wyll withdrawe
Tyll of dame Justyce they knowe the sentence
They argue often and make defence
Eche vnto other withouten remedy
I wyll no lenger of them specefy

Capitulum tercium.

COme on fayre youth and go with me
Unto that place that is delectable
Bylded with towres of curyolyte
And yet though that ye be lamentable
Whan thou art there you wylt be confortable
To se the merueyles that there be wrought
No man can pryntit in his thought

A path we founde ryght gretely hied
Where in we went tyll at the last
A castell I sawe wherof I mused
Not fully from me a stones cast
To se the towres I was agast
Set in a valey so strongely fortefyed
So gentyll compassed and well edefyed

The towres were hyghe of adamond stones
With sanes wauerynge in the wynde
Of ryght fyne golde made for the noonys
And roobuckes ran bader the lynde
And hunters came theym fer behynde
A Joye it was suche sawe I neuer
Abyde quod she ye shall se a better.

Forth she me ledde to the castell warde
Where we were let in by humylyte
And so after she lede me forwarde
Tyll that I sawe a royall tre
With buddys blossomed of grete beaute
And than we wente in to the hall
That glased was truely with crystall

And hanged was with clothes of Arras
Made of fyne golde with a noble story
How that there sonne tyme reygnynge was
In the regyon of hyghe Italy
A valyaunt emperour and a myghty
That had to name forsothe Tybertus
Whiche dyde enquere of prudent Jolethus

¶ Why he his offycers so longe kepte
Unto hym he answered a good cause why
Somtyme I sawe a man that slepte
That wounded was full pyteously
And on his woundes suckynge many a fly
I than for pyte moued theym away
By whiche he woke and to me dyde say

¶ Wher that thou trowed to me comfort
Thou now hast done me double greuaunce
Puttynge away the flyes that dyde resorte
To me beynge full of blody lustynaunce
By this thou mayst haue good perseueraunce
That now wyll come the flyes moost hungry
That wyll me byte.x.tymes more greuously

¶ The rook was wrought by meruelous gemetry
Colered with asure gold and go wlys
With knottes corven full ryght craftely
And set also with wanton fowlys
As poppyn iays/pyes/Jays/and owlys
And as I loked on my ryght syde
A lady I sawe of meruellous pryde

¶ Syttynge in a chayer at the vpper ende
Of all the hall as a lady and prynces
Amonge many kynges that dyde entende
To be obedyent to her hyghe noblenes
Her apparell was made of moche fayre ryches
Set with rubyes moost pure and rubicound
Embrawded with perles and many a dyamound

Belydes her late the worthyes nyne
And she amonge theym a whele turnynge
Full lowe to her they dyd than enclyne
She somtyme laughynge and somtyme lowrynge
Her condycyon was to be dyssymelynge
And many exalten vpon her whele
Gyuynge theym grete falles that they dyd fele

Than sayd dyscrecyon beholde and see
That in dame fortune is no stablenes
This worlde also is but a vanyte
A dreme a pompe nothynge in stedfastnes
For fortune is fals and full of doblenes
Whan she mooste flatereth she is not sure
As thou mayst se daylyin vre

Capitulum.iiii.

HOwth than we went vnto the habytacle
Of dame hardynes mooſt pure and fayre
Aboue all places a ryght fayre ſpectacle
Strowyd with floures that gaue good eyer
Of vertuous turkeys there was a cheyr
Wherin ſhe ſate in her cote armure
Berynge a ſheide the felde of azure

Wherin was ſette a rampynge lyon
Of fyne golde ryght large and grete
Alwerd ſhe had of merueylous faſſyon

As though a thousand she sholde dete
No man the victory of her myght gete
A noble virgyn there dyde her serue
That fyrst made harnes called Mynerue

The chaumbre where she held her consystory
The dewe aromatyke dyde oft degoute
Of fragraunt floures full of delycasy
That all yll heyres dyde enlence oute
A carbuncle there was that all aboute
Enlumyned the chaumbre both day and nyght
My thought it was an heuenly syght

Nyne quenes I sawe that satte her by
Beynge all armed of grete fortytude
In many a stowr they wanne the victory
And were endued with facounde pulcrytude
For to haunte armes was theyr consuetude
Many a regyon they often wanne
And also vanquysshed many a noble man

Nexte vnto her sate the hyghe quene Azia
That was a conqueres so puyssaunt
And besyde her the quene of Saba
Whiche in grete ryches was tryumphaunt
And also Ipolyte in armes valyaunt
Sate with her besyde quene Hecuba
And yet also the quene Europa

Present ther was the viche quene Iuno
And quene Pantasyll wyth fayre quene Elyn
And yet I sawe by her than also
The noble virgyn yonge Polyxyn

That was destroyed at the last ruyn
Of Troye the grete by cruell Pyrrus
The sone of Achylles that was so cheualrus

As I dyd loke I had commaundement
Of dame dyscrecyon for to remembre
These noble ladyes so pure and excellent
Hardy in corage of age tyght tendre
Yet not withstandynge deth dyde surrendre
And all theyr strength and lusty corage
For he spareth nother youth ne age

Capitulum. v.

Forth we walked to the dwellynge place
Of dame Sapyence so full of blys
Replete with Joye vertu and grace
No thynge there lacked that possyble is
Man for to comfort withouten mys
Though he were derke in worldely foly
He sholde there be enlumyned shortely

Her towre was made of werkes curyous
I can no thynge extende the goodlynes
Of her palays so good and glorryous
Bylded in the place soth of fastnes
With owten tast of worldely bytternes
No persone can extoll the souerente
Of her worthy and royall dygnyte

She eche estate sholde haue in gouernaunce
As theym to rule or that they repent
For better it is to haue good puruyaunce
At the begynnynge as is expedyent
Than for to wyssh for thynges myspent
That myght be saued longe afore
And with a forwytte kepte in store

Her chaumbre was glased with byrall clarefyed
Depeynted with colours of delectacyon
A place of pleasure so heuenly glorryfyed
In vertue heale lyfe and saluacyon
Without ony stormy trybulacyon
That myght anoy the heuenly helth
But alway comfort to the sowlys welth

There late dame prudence in vertue magnyfyed
Impossyble it is to shewe her goodelyhed
She was so fayre and clerely puryfyed
And so discrete and full of womanhede
That and I trowe vertue were deed
It sholde reuyue yet in her agayne
She was so gentyll and without dysdeyn

It was grete comfort vnto my hert
For to beholde that heuenly syght
Discrecyon sayd I sholde not depert
Tyll I had spoken with her syster bryght
Forth she me ledde with all her myght
Unto that prynces and royall souerayn
Ergo my labour was not in vayn

Than spake dame prudence with meke contenaūce
Welcome discrecyon my syster dere
Where haue ye ben by longe contynuaunce
Wyth youth she sayd that ye se here
And for my sake I you requere
Hym to receyue in to your seruyse
And he shall serue you in goodely wyse

Welcome she sayd for my systers sake
And yet allo now for your owne
In to my seruyce I wyll you take
Sythens that your wyldnes is ouerblowen
The sede of vertu on you shall be sowen
Wyce to depryue by his good auctoryte
As for to subdue all yll iniquyte

Of other mennes wordes be thou not holde
And of theyr promys make no beheſt
And yf thou here an yll tale tolde
Gyue no iugement but ſay the beſt
So ſhall thou lyue euermore in reſt
Who lytell medeleth is beſt at eaſe
For well were he that all myght pleaſe

Beware kepe the from grete offence
That thou condempned be not by ryghtwyſnes
Whan ſhe doth gyue her mortall ſentence
Without peaſe or mercy cauſe her reles
Her iugement of mortall heuynes
That the beſt frende to the wyll be
The for to ſocour in grete neceſſyte

But yet in theym haue none affyaunce
As fyrſt to ſynne thynkynge that they
At the ende to the wyll be delyueraunce
Nay ryghtwyſnes wyll dryue theym away
For of all ſynnes without delay
Suche ſynne in hope it is the mooſt
For it is the ſynne of the holy ghooſt

Now I amytte you into your rome
In the whiche ye ſhall your ſelfe apply
Of myn owne chaumbre ye ſhall be grome
Loke ye be dylygent and do not vary
From my cõmaundementes neuer ſpecyally
For and ye wyll theym well obſerue
A moche better rome ye do deſerue

The fyrst cõmaundement that I gyue the
Thynke on the ende or thou begynne
For thou by ryght may knowe the certente
That deth is fyne of euery fynne
Be neuer taken in dyabolycall engyne
But that repentaunce may loose the lone
Of that grete fynne that thou hast done

Trust not to moche in fortunes grace
Though that she laugh on the a whyle
For she can sodenly turne her face
Whan that she lyst the to begyle
She welth and Joye can sone defyle
And plonge the in the pyte of pouerte
Wherfore in her haue thou no fuerte

Presume no ferther than the behoueth
For it wyll turne the to grete shame
For who that from his rome remoueth
Ye is often full gretely to blame
And medeleth with other in theym lame
As no thynge commynge nor expert
They may hym lay lyr malapert

Or that thou speke call to remembraunce
Vnto what mater thy worde shall sygnyfye
Loke that it tayne no man to greuaunce
Though that it be spoken merely
Yet many a one wyll take it greuously
Whiche that myght cause wroth and debate
Whyle that thou lyues beware of that

For a thynge lost without recouer
Loke that thou neuer be to pensyte
Thanke god of it thynke to haue an other
Lete wysedome than be to the comfortyte
That to thy brayn is best preseruatyte
For euermore ryght wyse is he
That can be pacyent in aduersyte

Proue thy freude in a maser fayned
Or thou haue nede than shalt thou se
Whyther he be iustly with the reteyned
The for to socour in thy necessyte
By profe thou mayst kno we the veryte
For profe afore that nede requere
Defeteth dowte euer in fere

Be thou neuer so blynde in wylle
Yet loke thou be refourmed by reason
Than shalt thou my mynde fulfyll
And thou therto thy selfe abandon
Stryue not with reason for none encheson
For wher she lacketh ther is grete outrage
And without her may not aswage

Eschew also the synne of pryde
The moder and the feruent rote
Of all the synnes at euery tyde
Wherfore trede thou her vnder fote
With helpe of vertue so swete and sote
Whiche is best salue to hele thy sore
And to thy helth the to restore

Wo worth synne without repentāunce
Wo worth bondage without reles
Wo worth man without good gouernaunce
Wo worth infynall payne and dystresse
Wo worth vyce put fer in presse
Wo worth soueraynte hauynge dysdeyn
And wo worth pyte that doth refrayn

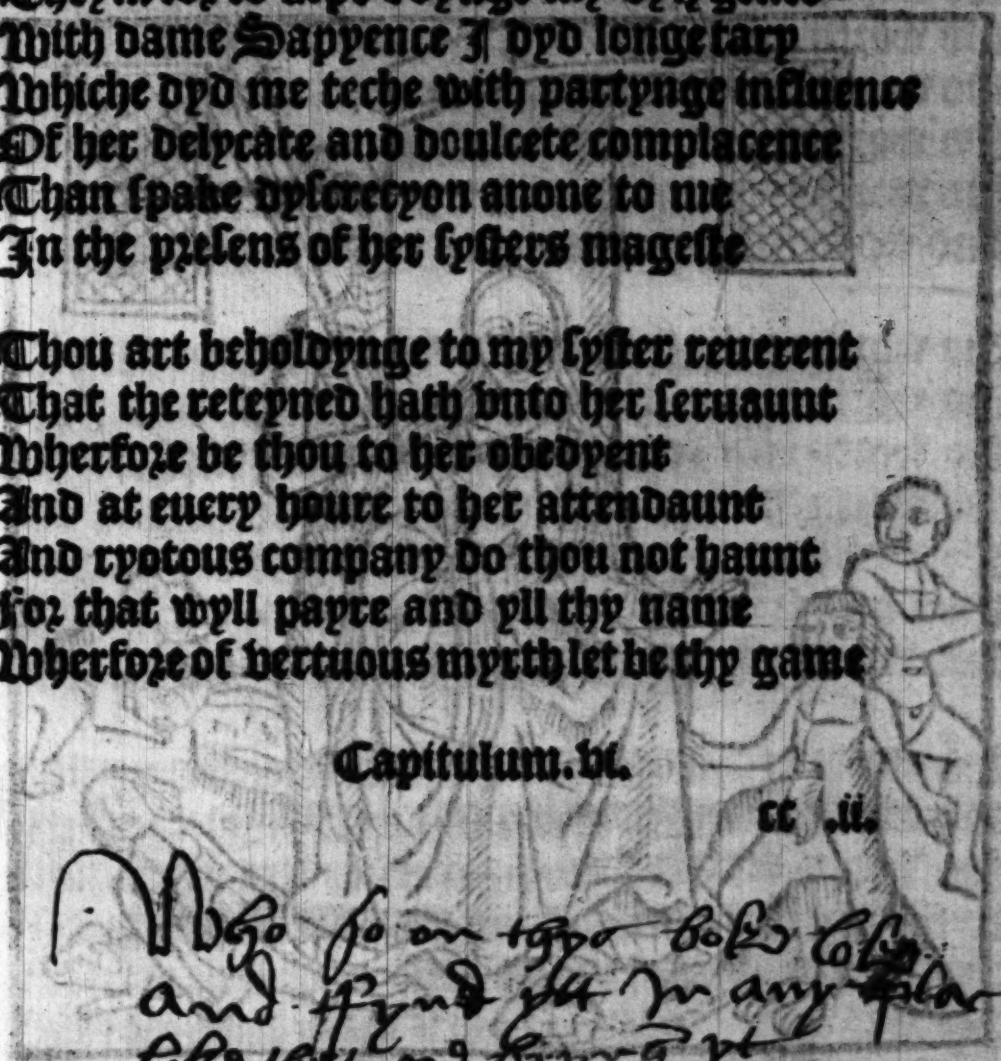
Wo worth ryght that may not be herd
Wo worth frendshyp without stabylyte
Wo worth true sentence that is deferd
Wo worth the man full of duplycyte
Wo worth hym without benygnyte
Wo worth lybertye withouten pease
And wo worth crueltye that may not cease

Wo worth connynge that is abused
Wo worth promys withouten payment
Wo worth vertue that is refused
Wo worth trouble without extynguysment
Wo worth foly on message sent
Wo worth reason that is exyled
And wo worth trouth that is defyled

Wo worth the trust without assuraunce
Wo worth grace not sette by
Wo worth Justyce kepte in dystaunce
Wo worth welth replete with enuy
Wo worth the batayll without vyctory
Wo worth begynnynge without good ende
And wo worth wronge that doth defende

Thēse commāundementes I put in memory
Theym for to kepe doynge my dylygence
With dame Sapyence I dyd longe tary
Whiche dyd me teche with partynge influence
Of her delycate and doulcete complacence
Than spake dyscrecyon anone to me
In the presens of her systers mageste

Thou art beholdynge to my syster reuerent
That the reteyned hath vnto her seruaunt
Wherfore be thou to her obedyent
And at euery houre to her attendaunt
And ryotous company do thou not haunt
For that wyll payre and yll thy name
Wherfore of vertuous myrth let be thy game



Capitulum. vi.

Who so on thyo boke loke
and ffynd ytt in any place
loke that ye bryng yt

Capitulum. vi.

DIscrecyon ferther forth me lede
Unto the solempne and royall mancyon
Of dame nature in humayne stede
Ryght pleasaunt was her habytacyon
Of merueylous werke and sytuacyon
And she her selfe helde her estate
In a gloryous chaumbre without chekmate

Her towre was gylted full of some bemys
And within hanged with cloth of aras
The roof was paynted with golden stremys
And lyke crystall depured was
Euery wyndowe aboute of glas
Where that she sat as a fayre goddes
All thynges creatynge by her helynes

Me thought she was of meruelous beaute
Tyll that Dyscrecyon lede me behynde
Where that I sawe all the pryuyte
Of her werke and humayne kynde
And at her backe I dyd than fynde
Of cruell deth a dolfull ymage
That all her beaute dyd perswage

Full wonderous was her operacyon
In euery kynde eke and ryght degre
Withouten rest or retreacyon
I wyll not medle with her secrete
For it no thynge longeth to my faculte
But somwhat after I wyll expres
Of her grete power and worthynes

But in my boke well for to procede
Dame dyscrecyon further me brought
Into a fayre chambre as ye may rede
Of fyne gemetry ryght well wrought
To comfort man there lacked nought
But that me thought there was no company
Saue onely dame dyscrecyon and I

We had ben but a lytell whyle there
But that we sawe a lady clere
Ryght well appareled in sad gere
Wylde in her hauour dyscrete of chere
That came vs by and very nere
Ascendynge vp in to her hyghe sete
Garnysshed with perle and with gold bete

Than sayd dyscrecyon this is dame Justyce
Clene of conscyence without corrupcyon
And neuer be spotted with the synne of couetyse
But true as stele in the entencyon
Of ryght euermore without destruccyon
Geuynge alway a ryghtfull iugement
Obey thou youth this lady reuerent

A iuge fulfylled with the synne of auaryce
Or with fauour of kynne made blynd
Must nedys do wronge by grete ꝑiudyce
For fauour shold not conscyence bynd
Ryght to dyssymyll as I now fynd
In problemys wryten of antiquyte
Made by philosophers of auctorite

As we stode talkynge thus to gydere
Up came dame fortune so gayly glorifyed
Impossyble it is for me to dyscouere
How gorges she was & gretly magnyfyed
Full lyke a goddes that had ben deyfyd
Clothed with gold sette full of rubyes
And tynsit w̄ emeraudys & many a turkes

And next to her there dyd ensue
Dame Hardynes that noble lady
After whome anone dyd pursue
Dame Sapyence whiche dyd not tary
Than came dame nature appareled royally
And all the other cladde in gold
Set with dyamondes many a fold

They lowted all vnto the ground
Afore dame Justycr for obeysaunce
That sate there both hole and sound
Withouten ony dyscontynuaunce
Gyuynge goderr vnto the vteraunce
Of these foure ladyes pledynge at barre
With all theyr cases dyd well avarre

Capitulum. vii.

Hyrſt dame hardynes began to plede
Sayinge ſhe was to man mooſt profytable
For ſhe the hertes hath often fede
Of conquerous as it was couenable
And by my corage haue made theym able
Regyons to wynne theyr ennemyes to ſubdue
And yf I were not they had it true

And yf a man be neuer so wyse
Withouten me he getyth none vtteraunce
Wherfore his wysedome may not suffyse
All onely without myn allegeaunce
For I by ryght must nedys enhaunce
A lowe born man to an hyghe degre
Yf that he wyll be ruled by me

Haue I not cauled many a noble warreour
To wynne the bateil by my grete myght
Without me was made neuer conquerour
Nor yet man corageous whan he dyd fyght
No man without me may defende his ryght
I may be wrost from hym forborne
For and I were not he were forlorne

Dyd I not cause the noble hercules
By my power to wynne the victory
Of the sturdy and stronge Philotes
As is recorded in bokes of memory
For without me can be no cheualry
And vnder the wynge of my protection
All rebels brought be to subiection

A realme is vpholden by thynges thre
The fyrst and the chyef it is the swerd
Whiche causeth it to be in good suerte
And other realmes of it to be aferd
By whiche the vsurpers be dysferd
From theyr wyll with treason knyte
And by me slayn for theyr fals fyte

The seconde is lawe that euer serueth
But within the realme onely
For other nacyons our lawe ne dredeth
But our swerd they do in specyally
For and they roose ayenst vs proudly
As they haue done often in tymes past
Yet w̄ our swerd they shold be ouercast

The thyrde be marchauntes that do multyply
In this realme welth and prosperyte
For of euery thynge they often occupy
Euery man lyke vnto his faculte
For without marchaunt es can not be
No realme vpholden in welth & plealure
For it to vs is a specyall treasure

Also yet hercules the puyssaunt geaunt
Dyd slee the monstre afore Troy the grete
And with his strokes he dyd hym daunt
They were so peysantly on hym sette
That he the victory on hym dyd gette
Had I not be comfort vnto his harte
Suche victory had ben leyd aparte

Dyd he not vaynquysshe in ẏ forest of Nemee
The thre mortall lyons by his grete hardynes
And ryued theyr Jawes as was to se
By twene his handes by chyualrus prowes
And yet by armes and knyghtly exces
In egypt he slewe the tyraunt Busyre
And brent hym after in a grete fyre

Also he slewe the tyraunt Cacus
For his tyranny and grete myschefe
By cause his dedys were so odyous
For he dyd murdre and was a thefe
Wherfore his deth to many was leef
Who more of his actes wyll haue report
To the Troyans story lette hym resort

Also the worthy and the noble hector
That eclyped was the troyans champyon
And of all cheualry called the flour
In his tyme reynynge and of renowme
Of whose noble dedes the byute and sowne
Was spred by euery straunge habytacyon
That they of his faytys dyde make relacyon

By his power and hardy corage
He put the grekes full often to flyght
And bete theym downe by a grete outrage
That well was he that hym saue myght
Full often he brought theym to the plyght
His dedes were pure without magycyon
And without nygromancy or suche corrupcyon

Dyd I not cause also kynge dauith
A lyon Jawbones to rent and tere
That dyd deuour his shepe in the fryth
As he sat kepynge of theym there
The lyons cruelte myght not hym fere
And he in his youth so hardy was
That he dyd sle the gyaunt Golias

Dyd I not cause the noble Julius
Emperour of rome for to be electe
By cause he was so stronge and cheualrus
Whan in armes he knewe the affecte
He all his ennemyes dyd abiecte
And by the support of my chyef socour
He gouerned hymselfe lyke a noble emperour

And also Arthur kynge of Bretayne
With all the knyghtes of the rounde table
Neuer auentures had sought certayne
And I therto had not ben greable
They for to fyght had not ben able
Who that me lacketh is but a coward
And shame is euer his rewarde

Also kynge Charlemayne kynge of Fraunce
With his dysslypers Rowland and Olyuer
With all the residue of his alyaunce
That in all armes so noble were
On goddys ennemyes brake many a spere
Causynge them to flee to theyr grete bylony
Hardynes was cause that they had byctory

O worthy hardynes the shynynge sterre
Alway to mannys herte the comfort
Whan that it is the tyme of werre
Unto what partye that thou resort
They wynne the batall by thy support
And wher that thou lettest thy bemys dysslende
They often hye to honoure assleyde

Than sayd dame hardynes vnto the Juge
I pray you that ryght I may haue
Sythens I to man am chyef refuge
Whan that he lysteth of me to craue
I make hym corageous and his worshyp saue
Wherfore I owte to haue the preemynence
By ryght reason and good experyence

That I deny you sayd dame Sapyence
Of whom haue you your ordre of pledynge
For ye neuer can haue none intellygence
But by the meane of myn informynge
For I am alway your mynde techynge
And without me your tale were but a fable
For ye without wytte sholde alway bable

This wyll I proue by myn opynyon
That I am grounde of the artes seuen
And of all good werkes in cõmunyon
For no man without me can go to heuen
My dedys be merueylous for man to neuen
Whan they beu wrought in to theyr degre
Who that wyll lerne theym he hath the lyberte

Of my dedes bokes do make recorde
The whiche clerkes put into remembraunce
For an example without discorde
Of heuenly way by vertuous gouernaunce
Without me man can haue no pleasaunce
Nor yet hym rule in no maner wyse
A man without wytte is to dyspyse

Hardynes without prudence may not auayle
Though that a man be neuer so sturdy
For a wyleman feble may wynne the batayle
Of hym that is ryght stronge and myghty
For better it is for to be ryght wytty
In the defence of his good saue garde
Than often to stryke and to renne forwarde

That thynge that hardynes may not wynne
May be goten by my hyghe louerente
And with the helpe of subtyle engynne
It may be brought to the extrempyte
Wher that it myght not by possybylyte
Of hardynes longe afore be wonne
Yet by grete wysedome it may be donne

Unto dyuers cases I take excepcyon
Of dame Hardynes whiche are no lawe
Unto the fyrst vndre your correccyon
She sayd.and she her power dyd wythdrawe
No rebell than shold stand in awe
And she is the chyef as I know well
That causeth hym for to be rebell

By her foly and folysshe hardynes
She causeth men to ryse ayenst theyr lorde
She is the cause of mortall heuynes
Whan she doth breke the good concorde
Wherfore me thynke by one accorde
For to exyle her it is now the best
Than man sholde lyue in peas and rest

And where she sayd thāt she exalted
Julius cesar by her grete exylence
In that case she ryght clerely varyed
For it was I by my grete dylygence
That neuer was out of his presence
But ruled hym and made hym worthy
To be chosen emperour of all Italy

Chosen he was by the comyn assent
For the grete wysedome that in hym shone
With a grete voyce and a hole entente
For lyke vnto hym was there none
That was so abell as he alone
For to occupye an Emperours dygnyte
Of his promocyon he myght thanke me

I Sapyence am endewed with grace
And the lode sterre of heuenly doctryne
The sprynge of comfort Joye and solace
Who that lyst to me for to enclyne
He shall knowe thynges that be dynyue
And at his ende beholde the deyte
That is one god and persones thre

It pleased the fader that is omnipotent
His sone to send to be incarnat
Of the vyrgyn Mary the sterre moost excellent
Mayden and moder yet not vyolate
Lyke a vessell chosen and made ornat
All onely for to be goddys moder
And he hym selfe vnto man broder

But a ſtryfe there was bytwene god and man
Whan man conſented to ſynne dedely
By that the dyſcorde fyrſt began
Whan he the ſone of god on hy
That is his brother agayn wyll crueely
Yf he had power by whiche is offended
The fader of heuen as is entended

Therfore lete vs to our brother go
Named Jheſu Cryſt and axe hym mercy
With a good entent and hert alſo
There is for vs none other remedy
That ony tonge truely can ſperyfy
And he wyll take it for a correccyon
And of all vengeaunce ſeale the affeccyon

That we may of hym haue forgyuenes
Of our grete ſynne with reformacyon
Of peas bytwene the faders hyghenes
Of heuen and vs in ſulpyracyon
Therfore yf thou drede the amocyon
Of his ryghtwyſnes loke that thou flee
Ryght faſt vnto his mercyfull pyte

For his mercy is more than all our myſery
And eke aboue his werkes all
As Dauyd ſheweth in his prophecy
Sayinge his mercy is ouer all
To whom I pray euer in eſpecyall
To gyue me grace well my penne to lede
That quaketh aye for drede

Dame Sapyence sayd I do procede
Of the strength of the holy ghoost
That is and shall be mater in dede
God and lorde of myghtys mooste
Whose infynall power was neuer lost
And yet neuer had no begynnynge
But alway lyke stronge without endynge

Where that dame hardynes in her pledynge
Made her selfe to knyghtes mooste necessary
By the meanes of her power shewynge
That I by tyght do now well deny
For in that case she dyd moche vary
For lyke there are that more profyte be
Of whiche the lest is better than she

The fyrst is prudence that is the chefe
That hym doth rule and is his gyde
And kepeth hym from grete repreue
And cauleth his worshyp for to abyde
So euery crysten man shold prouyde
By his wit to withstand the deuyll
That he consent not to do euyll

The seconde is that he sholde be true
To his souerayn lorde that on hym reyneth
And all treason for euer to eschewe
In whiche grete shame often remayneth
And by whiche he his ꝛ̃ne dysteyneth
So a crysten man sholde be true euer
To Jhesu Cryst that was his redemer

The thyrde is that he sholde be lyberall
Amonge his cõmons withouten lette
That is the cause euer in generall
That he the loue of theym doth gette
For it causeth theyr hertes on hym be lette
So euery true crysten man sholde be
To god intended with lyberalyte

The fourth is that he sholde be stronge
His ryght euer for to defende
And neuer to no man for to do wronge
But wronges for to dyrecte and amende
As ferre as his power wyll extende
So a true crysten man sholde exclude
All maner of vyces by his fortytude

The fyfth is ỹ he sholde be mercyable
In all his dedes withouten furoure
For that to hym is gretly conuenable
And eke to kepe hym out of errour
For he of mercy sholde be a myrrour
So vnto them it is ryght necessary
Who that wyll be saued for to haue mercy

The fyrte is a knyght ought for to kepe
The poore folke in theyr grete nede
That often for hungre and thyrst do wepe
He ought with almes theym for to fede
And the better he shall than spede
So euery true crysten man sholde do
As ferre as his power cometh vnto

Sapyence am of the kynges counsayll
Whiche is clothed with purple that syngnyfyeth
The grace and the pulcrytude without sayll
Of grete vertues that in hym shyneth
For to no vyces he neuer enclyneth
Hauynge in his hede a fayre crowne royall
That sheweth his dygnyte to be regall

Whiche to his people is the chefe glory
Thrugh whome his subgectes be dyrecte
And made obedyent to hym certaynly
At euery houre by ryght true effecte
But forthermore by good aspecte
He bereth a ball in his lefte hande
The whiche betokeneth as I vnderstande

A kynge to be a good admynystratour
Unto his subgectes in euery place
And to be for theym a good prouysour
As reason requyreth in euery case
Sapyence do rule his noble grace
In his ryght hand he hath a sceptre
That doth syngnyfye by ryght his rygoure

Yll men to punysshe for theyr offence
By his ryghtwysnes whome the loue
Of vertue shynynge in experyence
Doth not extoll nor yet now remoue
A lampe doth hange his heed aboue
Alway lyght and clerely brennynge
Whiche syngnyfyeth the mercy of a kynge

The olde philosophers by theyr prudence
Fonde the seuen scyences lyberall
And by theyr exercyse & grete dylygence
They made theyr dedes to be memoryall
And also poetes that were fatall
Craftely colored with clowdy fygures
The true sentence of all theyr scryptures

O Justyce lady and souerayne goddesse
Gyue you true sentence now vpon me
As ye be surmountynge in vertue & noblesse
Lete me dame Sapyence haue the soueraynte
As is accordynge to my royall dygnyte
For I am moost profytable vnto man
And euer had ben syns the world began

Than sayd dame Fortune ye are imperfyte
Without that I therto be accordaunt
For all your hardynes & prudence perfyte
I vnto you must be well exuberaunt
And with your werkes euer concordaunt
Where that I fauer they haue good cõfort
In all theyr dedes by my swete report

I Fortune am the rule and steere
Of euery persone lyke to my wyll
That in this worlde now lyueth here
Whan that I lyst for to fulfyll
My mynde ryght sone I can dystyll
The dewe of comfort welth and rychesse
To man exaltynge hym to noblenesse

Though that a man were neuer so hardy
Without me he myght not attayne
And though that a man were neuer so wytty
And I dyd my power from hym refrayne
All his labour were loſt in vayne
So hardyneſſe and prudence in no wyſe
Without good fortune may well ſuffyſe

Though that a man were but a fole
Yf I conſent that he be fortunate
He nedyth not to make no grete dole
For I ſhall mayntene ſo his eſtate
That he in ryches ſhall be ſo eleuate
Fulfylled with welth & worldely treſure
That he ſhall lacke no maner of pleaſure

Where that dame hardynes wold afferme
By her caſes that are ſo vnſure
That ſhe by her power doth conferme
The knyghtes of victory for to be ſure
Whan ſhe doth take theyr hertes in cure
Yf fortune be away ſhe may not auayle
For they by reaſon muſt loſe the batayle

Yet forthermore as I do well conſyder
How dame hardynes dyd expreſſe
Sythens the tyme that I came hyder
That ſhe promoted had to worthynes
Hector dauid and the noble hercules
With many other wherof ſhe fayleth
For it was fortune as ſhe well knoweth

For in olde tyme the noble warryours
For to eschewe euer my grete daungere
In whiche tyme they were ydolestours
Than they to put hym oute of fere
To ydols went that theyr goddes were
For to haue answer yt they sholde wynne
The batayll or they dyd begynne

What nede I pleed by longe contynuaunce
As dame Sapyence dyd in maters hy
It were of tyme but dyscontynuaunce
But o dame Justyce the gentyll lady
Loke that ye Juge my mater tyght wysely
That I of hardynes may be the pryncypall
And of dame prudence & nature with all

Than sayd dame nature that may not be
As I can proue by tyght and reason
For I am moost confort to humanyte
As man well knoweth at euery encheason
And can not be forborne for none season
For where I lacke without ony delay
Man is but dede and turned to clay

That nature gyueth by her power
Wyledome nor hardynes may not defete
For I to man am the chefe doer
Durynge his lyfe without retrete
Also dame fortune may not well lete
Me of my course though she it thought
In sondery wyse my dedes are so wrought

Though that a man were infortunable
And though that he were neuer so folysshe
And a grete coward to fyght not able
Yet shulde he lyue and neuer perysshe
Tyll that my power of hym doth fynysshe
Whiche fayle must ones it is my propyete
And that was gyuen me by the deyte

I am the ozygynall of mannes creacyon
And by me alway the wozld doth multyply
In welth pleasure and delectacyon
As I wyll shewe nowin this party
My dedes be subtyll & wzought craftely
What were the wozlde yf I were note
It were lone done as I well wote

The lawe of nature doth man bynde
Both beste foule and fysshe also
In theyr degre to do theyr kynde
Blame theym not yf they do so
For harde it is euer to ouer go
The kynde of nature in her degre
For euery thynge must shewe his propyete

Who of theyr propyetes lyst to rede
Lete hym loke in the boke of barthelmewe
And to his scripture take good hede
That ryght nobly of theym do shewe
With all theyr actes beynge not a fewe
But wounderous many by alteracyon
For lyke hath lyke his operacyon

I nature norysshe by myn afflyccyon
Mannes humayne partyes superfyxcyall
And am the sprynge of his complexion
The fonteyne of his vaynes inferyall
To hym conserue moost dere and specyall
Though he were hardy & wyse he myzt not me forbere
Nor fortune without me auayleth not hym a pere

Wherfore dame Justyce be you now indyfferent
Consydre that I am moost dere and lefe
Unto euery man that is eliquylent
And aboue all medycyns to hym moost chefe
And by my strongh vnto hym relefe
In his dysease wherfore as thynke me
I ought of reason to haue the soueraynte

Than spake dame Justyce with meke contenaũce
I wyll all your contrauersy now redresse
For I of your reasons haue good perseueraunce
And after your cases both more and lesse
Wherfore I Justyce by good ryghtwysnesse
Gyue now vpon you a fynall Jugement
That ye foure agree by a hole assent

Man for to please at euery houre
Without dysgrement or contradiccyon
And in his nede to do hym socoure
With louynge herte and true affeccyon
He shall be in your good iurysdyccyon
And you of hym shall be copertyners
Both of his lyfe and of his maners

Than layd dame hardynes I agre therto
And so do I than layd dame Sapyence
Than layd dame Fortune I also do
Agre vnto dame Justyce sentence
And I dame Nature wyll do my dylygence
Lyke as ye do man for to please
And hym to strength in his dysease

With that dame Justyce vp arose
Unto the ladyes byddynge fare well
And went into her chaumbre close
I cleped conscyence wher she dyd dwell
As dame Discrecyon dyd me tell
Than hardynes & fortune went downe the stayre
And after theym Nature so clere and fayre

Capitulum. viii.

Dame Sapyence taryed a lytell whyle
Behynd the other saynge to Discrecyon
And began on her to laugh and smyle
Arynge her how I stode in condycyon
Well she layd in good perfeccyon
But best it is that he maryed be
For to eschewe all yll sensualyte

I knowe a lady of meruelous beaute
Spronge out of hyghe and noble lynage
Replete with vertue and full of bounte
Whiche vnto youth were a good maryage
For she is comen of royall apparage
But herde it wyll be to gete her loue
Without youth frayltye do sore reproue

I kneled downe than vpon my kne
Afore dame Sapyence with humble chere
Belechynge her of me to haue pyte
And also Dyscrecyon her syster dere
Than dame Sapyence came me nere
Saynge youth wyll ye haue a wyfe
And her to loue durynge her lyfe

Ye madame that wolde I fayne
Yf that she be both fayre and bryght
I wyll her loue euer more certayne
And pleas her alway with all my myght
Of suche a persone wolde I haue a syght
With all my herte now at this houre
Wolde to god I had so fayre a floure

Than sayd dyscrecyon there is a kynge
Dwellynge fer hens in a fayre castell
Of whome I oft haue herd grete talkynge
Whiche hath a doughter as I you tell
I trowe that youth wyll lyke her well
She is both good eke fayre and pure
As I repoyt me vnto dame Nature

But yf that youth sholde her go seke
Ye must syster than hym well indue
With your grete power so good and meke
That he all frayltye may eschue
For by the way it wyll oft pursue
On hym by flatery and grete temptacyon
That shall brynge hym in tribulacyon

As for that sayd she he shall not care
For he shall theym sone ouercome
And of theyr flatery tyght well beware
For I to hym shall gyue grete wysedome
Theyr dedes to withstande & make theym dõme
Wherfore dere syster as I you pray
Unto her lede hym now on the way

Loke that ye send me in his necessyte
By dame swyftnes full sone a letter
By whiche that I may knowe the certaynte
That I may come to ayde hym beter
So that fraylte to hym be no freter
And though I be not alway vysyble
With hym my power he hath inuyncyble

Than sayd dame Sapyence to dyscrecyon
Fare well dere syster I may not tary
Loke ye of youth haue the tuycyon
That he fall not into vaynglory
And that ye puruey for hym shortly
That he may wedde the fayre dame clennesse
Whiche for her loue haue ben in duresse

With that dame Sapyence downe went
In to her place that was the doctrynall
Of famous clerkes in connynge splendent
A myrrour of lernyng that was dyuynall
With all the craftes artyficyall
Byfore her dame Fortune went to her mancyon
And eke dame hardynes to her habytacyon

HOwth than went dyscrecyon and I
Out of the castell into a grene
Where byrdys sange by grete melody
There daunst also the fayre quene
Besyde a ryuer named Ephelene
Ouer whiche we wente to the other syde
That was a medowe both longe and wyde

Longe there we wandred tyll at the laſt
We came vnto a ryght grete wyldernes
By that tyme Phebus was ouer paſt
Wherfore we walked in grete derkenes
The whiche to me was a grete heuynes
For Lucyna eke dyd her ſhrowde
Under a blacke and myſty clowde

For ſhe was horned and no thynge cleere
And entred into the ſygne of caprycorne
Ryght ferre from phebus fulgent ſpeere
And not ayenſt hym the crowne had worne
I went vp and downe tyll on the morne
That phebus his golden reyes dyd ſprede
Than dyſcrecyon ferther forth me lede

Amonge thornes ſharpe & beſtes wylde
There was the lyon the wolf & the bere
But I coude mete nother man ne chylde
But many ſerpentes that dyde me fere
And by a ſwete ſmelle I knewe a pantere
So forth I went by longe contynuaunce
Tyll that I ſawe an herber of pleaſaunce

To whiche I toke anone my waye
Where that I ſawe a lady excellent
Rydynge on a goote in freſſhe arraye
Ryght yonge of age & luſty of entent
Prayenge me to her for to aſſent
As to fulfyll the fleſſhly pleaſure
Whiche ſhe deſyred me out of meſure

Nay layd dyscreyon that may not be
No layd I in no maner of wyse
To her request I wyll now agree
But euermore here foule lust despyse
For I my selfe do now aduyse
To kepe me chast that I may mary
Fayre dame Clennes that noble lady

So forth I went walkynge my iournay
Metynge a lady olde and amyable
Syttynge in a castell both frelly and gay
On an olyphauntes backe in strength to stable
Whiche it to bere was good and able
Hauynge in her hande a cup of golde
Sette with perles ryght many a folde

She sayd she was the lady of rychelle
The quene of welth and worldely glory
Prayynge me to company with her noblenelle
And she than wolde promote me shortely
To innumerable ryches and make me worthy
Where I am poore and sette by nought
By her to worshyp I sholde be brought

Unto her I answered I wolde not so
As for to hunt in the parke of pryde
The whiche to Clennes is mortall fo
But with Dyscrecyon I wyll abyde
Whiche doth a wyke for me prouyde
By whome I shall haue the possellyowne
Of heuenly kyngdome & grete renowne

So forth I went and had grete traudyle
Without the comfort of ony persons
Saue of dyscrecyon whiche dyd me counsayle
As she went walkynge with me alone
Unto her I made full grete mone
And lykened the wylderues by morall science
Unto worldely trouble by good experyence

She layd the fyrst lady that I dyd mete
Clypped was dame Sensualyte
Whiche can well flater with wordes swete
Caulynge a man to fall into fragylyte
And for to haunt the carnall freylte
Whiche vnto clennes is abhomynable
For they in werke be gretely varyable

The seconde was pryde enduyd with couetyse
A lady of ryght fruytles medytacyon
Delytynge gretly in the lynne of auaryce
The whiche is cause of her dampnacyon
For she by her fals supportacyon
Blyndeth many a mannes conscyence
And dryueth ryght oft fer in absence

So ferther I went tyll at the last
I was in a male goynge in and oute
Ther was none other way I was agast
But forth I walked in grete doute
Now here now there and so rounde aboute
Than sayd vnto me dame Dyscrecyon
Ye are in the helynes of worldely fashyon

There in I trauayled by longe space
Tyll that I mette a lady gloryous
Indued with vertue and grete grace
To whom I sayd o lady precyous
As ye seme to be good and vertuous
I you beseche now without delaye
Vnto dame Clennes to teche me the waye

I Sapyence now wyll shewe to the
The ryght waye vnto fayre clennes
And yf thou wylt be ruled by me
Thou shalt mary that noble prynces
Yes that wyll I sayd than douteles
Discretcyon sayd she wolde be my suerte
Sapyence sayd none better myght be

Than sayd discretcyon to dame sapyence
Welcome to vs my syster dere
And I to her dyd humble reuerence
Saynge who had went to fynde you here
Yes she sayd I haue ben neere
You often tymes syth my departynge
And haue ben cause of your goode gydynge

Capitulum.x.

Come on your waye walke on a pace
For ye longe for to haue a syght
Of dame Clennes so clere a face
So goodely of body in beauty bryght
That there can not be so fayre a wyght
So forth we walked to a ryuer syde
That ebbed and flowed at euery tyde

Than I saw a castell a pales royall
Bylded with marble blacke as the gette
With glasse wyndowes as clere as crystall
Whiche on the other syde was sette
No man to the castell myght gette
But ouer the water on a lytell brydge
Not halfe so brode as a hous rydge

But as I cast myn eye than alyde
I saw a lady wounderous fayre
Demure of contenaunce without pryde
That went her selfe for to repayre
By the water syde to take the ayre
Beholde and se than sayd dame sapyence
Yonder is dame Clennes the sterre of excellence

Full glad was I than in my mynde
For to se that flour of complacence
The syght of her dyd my herte bynde
Euer her to loue with percynge influence
Unto her I sayd o well of contynence
Unto your grace fayne wolde I go
Ner lettynge of this water blo

To me she answered than agayne
Saynge this worlde withouten mys
Is but a vanyte no thynge certayne
In the lyke wyse as this water is
Ye can not come to me now ywys
But by that brydge that goth ouer
This stormy troublous & wawy water

Therof sayd sapyence he shall not lette
Well sayd Clennes be you his gyde
And dyscrecyon also for to be sette
For to vpholde hym vnto the other syde
That he do not in the water slyde
So to the brydge they dyde me lede
I quacked than for fere and drede

I sawe there wryten this lytterall sence
No man this brydge may ouer go
But he be pure without negligence
And stedfast in goddes byleue also
yf he be ignorraunt and do not so
He must nedys into this water fall
Ouer the heed and be drowned with all

They led me ouer this brydge so perylous
Tyll that I came to a preuy place
Where were wryten with letters glorryous
This is the kyngdome of grete grace
No man by yonde this marke may trace
But yf he be brought in by dame wysedome
If he so be he is moche welcome

So forthermore yet forth we went
In to a hall that was solacyous
Made of precyous stones splendent
That theym to se it was ryght wounderous
They were there so gretly plenteuous
That the hall paued was for the nones
With none other grauell but precyous stones

There was dame Clennes that lady gent
And eke her fader the kynge of loue
He satte in a chayre ryght clere and excellent
At the vpper ende of the hall aboue
He satte styll and dyd not remoue
Gyrde with wylowes and myght not se
No maner a thynge in his degre

He had two wynges ryght large and grete
And his body also was naked
And a dart in his ryght hand was sette
And a torche in his left hand brenned
A botell aboute his necke was hanged
His one leg armed and naked the other
Hym for to se it was a wonder

Sapyence bad me meruayll no thynge
For she wold shewe me the sygnifycacyon
Why he so sate by shorte rekenynge
Accordynge to a morylyzacyon
Now of the fyrste to make relacyon
Loue sholde be gyrde faste with stabylyte
Without whiche loue can haue no suerte

Loue may not se but is alway blynde
And wenyth no man can haue perseueraūce
Where that he loueth by naturall kynde
But he do shewe hym by wordes of vteraūce
Trught he bewreyeth hym by contenaunce
For hard it wyll be loue so to couere
But that som man shall it perceuere

Also his nakednes doth sygnyfy
That true loue no thynge ellys desyreth
But the very persone and eke body
That he so well and feruentely loueth
His wynges also well betokenyth
That his mynde fleeth vnto the persone
That he doth loue so well alone

And also loue is stryken with a sharpe darte
That maketh a man for to complayn
Whan that it hath wounded sore his herte
It brenneth hote lyke fyre certeyn
Than loue his purpose wolde fayne atteyn
And is euermore both hoot and drye
Tyll his lady gyue hym drynke of mercy

His one legge is armed to defende
The ryght that longeth vnto amyte
And wronge loue for to amende
His naked legge betokeneth charyte
That is the Joye of grete felycyte
So charyte ryght loue and good concorde
With stablynes reygneth in this myghty lorde

Capitulum.xi.

Than forth me led good dame Sapyence
Afore that myghty lordes mageste
Come on she sayd put the in presence
That thou mayst se dame clennes beaute
Ponder in thy mynde by veryte
That so fayre as she was not quene helyn
Quene Jpolyte or yonge Polyxyn

This lady is clene without corrupcyon
And wereth thre crownes for her vyrgynyte
One is for people of perfyt relygyon
An other for maydens keppynge chastyte
The therde for true wedowes as ỹ mayst se
I wyll the now to her fader present
Her for to mary yf she wyll consent

Thãn sayd dame sapyence o noble emperour
O souerayne lorde and royall potestate
O victorious prynce & famous conqueroure
O kynge of loue and sealer of debate
To the no creature may say chekmate
I present the now this vertuous knyght
For to mary clennes your doughter bryght

I thanke you he sayd for your good wyll
But he that to Clennes maryed must be
He must my commaundement fyrste fulfyll
As to scomfyte the dragon with heedes thre
That is a serpent of grete subtylte
Whiche well betokeneth as we do fynde
The worlde the flesshe & the deuyll by kynde

Sapyence sayd I sholde not fayle
To do his commaũdement for Clennes sake
As for to sle the dragon in batayle
That lay in a marys in a grete lake
Whiche was moche stynkynge foule & blake
Wyledome bade me be not aferde
For she wolde gyue me a shelde and swerde

And arme me also with fayre armure
To vayncquysshe that dragon so ferse & grete
She sayd it sholde be so good and sure
That I no harme of hym sholde gete
Though he his teth on me had sete
yet sholde I slee hym for all his myght
By my grete strokes whan I dyd fyght

Fyrst she my legge harneys sette on
And after my plackerd of grete ryches
She armed me her selfe alone
And laced my helmet of her gentylnes
I thanked her for her grete goodnes
And gaue me my swerde and sheld also
Saynge lete vs to the dragon go

This is the armure for the soule
That in his epystole wrote sayntꝑ poule
Good hope thy legge harneys shall be
The habergyn of ryghtwysnes gyrde wt chastyte
Thy plackarde of belynes wt braūches of almes dede
Thy shelde of beleue and mekenes for the hede
Thy swerde shall be the to defend
The worde of god the deuyll to blynde

Dame lappence & I dyd take our lycence
Of the kynge of loue in vertue depured
And of his doughter shynynge in excellence
Whiche to me sayd with wordes assured
O vertuous knyght you for me haue dured
Ingrete wo & payne but thynke you verely
To sconfyt that dragon by wyledonie shortly

Thãn went we forth to that serpent
In merueylous trauayle of sorowe and bale
By that tyme the daye tyght fayre was spent
And phebus his course began to anale
But at the last we came into a dale
Wher we felt the sauer of a dungeon
Of the foule and stynkynge dragon

Nere to that dragon there was a way
That men vsed vpon a fayre hyll
Unto hyghe heuen so frelly and gay
But that dragon lette theym theyr wyll
And by the way he dyd theym kyll
Bryngynge theym vnto the dungeon
Clypped the place of grete oblyuyon

I had not be there halfe an houre
But that this dragon me approched
As though that he wolde me deuoure
He so fersly than on me marched
The batayle bytwene vs longe contynued
But he had me tyght sone ouercome
If I had not helpe of dame wysedome

I strake at hym fast with my swerde
And with my shelde dyd me defende
Wysedome bad me not be aferde
But my stroke that for to amende
As fer as my myght weld extende
So by her wordes I plucked vp myn herte
And dyd than vnto the dragon sterte

But he caught me than in his clawes
And so we wrasteled longe to gyder
But he hyld me sharpely in his pawes
Tyll wysedom my feblenesse dyd consyder
Beholde the layd dame clennes ponder
Than as a syde I cast all my syght
I sawe that lady so pure and bryght

My strength than dobeled an hundred folde
And I from hym brake by vertuous prowes
My herte was warme that afore was colde
With the cõfortable syght of fayre dame clennes
Than I to hym gaue strokes of exces
And with my sharpe swerde cut of anone
Two of his heedes leuynge hym but one

These two heedes by good morall sens
The worlde and the flesshe do syguyfy
As I in scrypture haue intellygence
The fyrste the worlde that is tranlytory
Lyeth bytwene man and heuenly glory
Lettynge hym often of his passage
If it of hym can gete auauntage

The seconde is the fleshly desyre
That troubleth a man right sore within
Settynge his courage vpon a fyre
Caulynge hym to encline to dedely syn
His fleshly the batayll of hym doth wyn
Often bryngynge hym into dampnacyon
If repentaunce were not his saluacyon

Repentaunce alway requyreth mercy
And penaunce to god is a satisfaccyon
For god desyreth euermore truely
An humble herte full of contrycon
And the worlde desyreth restytucyon
Of goodes that haue be goten wrongfully
To be restored vnto the ryghtfull party

Whan I by wysedom had won the victory
Of these two heedes I was ryght glad
His thyrde heed marched ayenst me sharpely
But I my swerd in my hand had
Strykynge at hym with strokes sad
And blode of hym coude I drawe none
For he had nother flesshe ne bone

But at the last I dyd hym vaynquysshe
Dryuynge hym home to his derke regyon
Of infernall payne that shall not fynysshe
For hell is called his proper mancyon
And of all other of his opynyon
That do the preceptes of god forsake
And to deuelyche werkes theym do betake

God by his ryghtwysnes made a lawe
By whiche man for dedely synne is condēpned
If god his vengeaunce do not withdrawe
In euerlastynge payne he sholde be pysoned
But and man mercy of hym requyred
With penytent hert he sholde it haue
And with his mercy he wyll man saue

Capitulum.xii.

Whan I had ſcomfyte this ſerpent benymous
Sapyence to me ryght gentely ſayd
Bleſſyd be god ye are ſo gracyous
That ye ſhall mary Clennes the mayd
But yet erwhyles ye were a frayd
ye I ſayd and ſwet full ryght ſore
Tyll ye newe ſtrength dyd me reſtore

This batayll was grete & longe endured
Whiche cauſed me to be ryght wery
But ſapyence with her wordes me mured
With walles of comfort makynge me mery
Come on ſhe ſayd and walke on lyghtly
Unto the caſtell that we come fro
I anſwered to her I wolde do ſo

Than forth we went a grete pace
Tyll that we came to the caſtell ſyde
There mette vs ladyes with grete ſolace
And welcomed vs at the ſame tyde
So fayre a ſort in the worlde ſo wyde
May not be founde by no maner of reaſon
As I ſawe there at the ſame ſeaſon

The fyrſte lady that dyd vs mete
Iclyped was dame perſeueraunce
Whiche to me ſayd with wordes ſwete
Bleſſyd be god of your good gouernaunce
That hath kept you from the incomberaunce
Of the ſerpent with the heedes thre
And cauſed you victor of hym to be

Than came dame fayth that lady glorious
Welcome she sayd with wordes amyable
I am ryght glad ye ar so victorious
Of that foule dragon so abhominable
She sayd that I was euermore stable
In her in dede eke worde and thought
Or elles my labour had ben to nought

Than spake the lady fayre dame charyte
Welcome vertue the noble veteran
Sythens that ye alway haue loued me
From the fyrst season that ye began
Bothe in your youth & syth ye were man
Ye haue had me in humble reuerence
And haue ben ruled by my preemynence

Than sayd dame prayer in my presence
Ye neuer cast me in obliuyaunce
By no slouth nor wordely negligence
But haue had me in grete remembraunce
Whiche hath ben to me very grete pleasaunce
Wherfore welcome vertue my dere
Unto this castell that ye se here

Than came fast to me dame lowelynes
Clyppynge me harde with louely chere
Byddynge me welcome with grete gladnes
As by her contenaūce it dyd well appere
Come on she sayd and walke on nere
So than amonge these fayre ladyes all
I went in to the grete castell hall

And there met me dame clennes blyue
And dame grace bare vp her trayne
Whiche euer to her was affyrmatyue
From whome dame clennes myght not refrayne
Than sayd she to me I am ryght fayne
That ye ar comen in to this place
Where ye shall wedde me in short space

Upon my kne I kneled than downe
Saynge o sterre of the blysse eterne
O well of vertue and of grete renowne
O dyuyne comfort moost sempyterne
Whan I your beautye do so well decerne
Ye set myn hert vpon a brennynge fyre
With feruent loue to come to my desyre

To me she answered in this wyse
O my dere herte my spouse so pure
Why do ye not on your fete aryse
You of my true loue shall be sure
For ye my hert haue now in cure
Lete vs go now to our fader reuerente
So forthe vnto hym than we wente

Whan that we came afore his fayre face
Dame clennes made curtesye vnto the grounde
Saynge o fader kynge of grete grace
This knyght to loue ye are now bounde
And so am I for I haue often founde
Grete kyndnes on hym both nyght and day
For he hath loued me ryght well alway

Welcome he sayd ryght noble knyght
How haue ye done sythens your departynge
Haue ye scomfyted with your myght
The merueylous dragon so gretly stynkynge
Ye I sayd with the power shynynge
Of my maystresse good dame sapyence
I dyd hym vaynquysshe by her experyence

Wher is dame Sapyence than sayd he
And eke her syster dame dyscrecyon
Syr I sayd they are comen with me
And they haue had me in iurisdyccyon
Syns my departynge without destruccyon
Than spake dame sapyence by her faculte
Unto that myghty lordes mageste

Sayinge this knyght than cleped vertue
Hath loued your doughter by longe contynuaūce
With stable loue so faythfull and true
And for her sake hath put to vteraunce
The thre heeded dragon by wyse puruyaunce
Wherfore me thynke he ought to mary
Your doughter Clennes that noble lady

The kynge sayd me thynke the same
If that my doughter wyll agre
And she do not she moche is to blame
Consyderynge his wysedome & grete beaute
Come hyder he sayd my doughter fre
To be wyfe to vertue wyll ye consent
Ye fader she sayd with hole entent

Than he called vnto his presence
Perseueraunce charyte and sydelyte
With lowlynes prayer and intellygence
Shewynge vnto theym the certeynte
How clennes his doughter wedded shall be
Unto me now vertu in all godely hast
By fore that thre dayes be ryght fully past

He called me than to his magnyfycence
Byddynge me go to bed and to rest
In the chaumbre of clene conscyence
Than so to do I thought it the best
For phebus was tourned into the west
So sapyence and I went forthe to bed
For lake of rest oppressed was my hed

A lytyll welp within this chaumbre was
That lay wakynge and barked alway
That no man in to it sholde passe
That wolde with conscyence make a fray
I dyd slepe there tyll that it was day
Than vp I rose and made me redy
Callynge vnto me dame sapyence shortely

Saynge vnto her o lady and maystres
O comfortable salue vnto euery sore
O fontayne of welth and carbuncle of clernes
Without ye helpe me I am forlore
Wherfore I shewe you as now before
Without I mary fayre dame clennes
I shall endure in mortall heuynes

Therof sayd she be no thynge adred
For ye shall mary here ryght soone
By me your mater shall be well sped
And the same daye it shall be doone
Aboute the houre truely of noone
And there shall be at your good dyner
Charyte fayth penaunce and prayer

Dame sapyence led me into a gardeyn
Whete Clennes was amonge floures swete
Her to repayre without dysdeyn
As I to her wente she dyd me mete
Bryngynge me a floure called the margarete
Whiche is a floure ryght swete and precyous
Indued with beaute and moche vertuous

This floure I kyst often ryght swetely
Settynge it nere vnto my hert
Dame Clennes loked vpon me louely
Saynge that I sholde not depert
Tyll she had shewed me a grete couert
So with her I wente without delay
Where byrdes sate on many a spray

By this tyme phebus had begon
His alcencyall cours in grete bryghtnes
In to the sygne of the fierous lyon
Exylynge the fenerous frosty coldnes
And depryuynge the noryall derkenes
And also setherus his fragraunt breth
Dystylled had vpon euery heth

Than to her I layd my lady dere
Beholde this weder so clere and fayre
How royall walkynge that it is here
Lyke a place of pleasure you to repayre
Amonge the floures so swete of ayre
In other she had as she me tolde
Bryghter than phebus a thousande folde

This is a place of recreacyon
My mynde to comfort after study
In welth pleasure and delectacyon
For yf I sholde my selfe applye
Euer to pray to god an hye
Without this place I may not be sure
In other tyme in prayer to endure

But the other gardyn is celestyall
That longeth to vs by enherytaunce
And is entayled to vs in generall
For our clene lyfe & vertuous gouernaũce
Who that vs loueth without doubtauũce
With vs shall go to eternall glory
In short space or elles to purgatory

Than forth we went to her fader royall
Whiche welcomed vs by grete humylyte
Saynge my doughter dere and specyall
Ye shall this daye by grete solempnyte
Be wedded to vertue with benygnyte
We kneled downe and thanked his grace
And than forth we went to an other place

IN to a chapell gayly glozyfyed
And also hanged with cloth of tyssue
A place it was ryght gretly deyfyed
The rook was set with stones of vertue
As with rubyes and emeraudes bzyght of hue
The rood loft was yuery garnyssyed with gold
Set with dyamoundes ryght many a fold

Ther I dyd se the arke of god
With many sayntes that suffred martyrdom
And also I sawe there Moyses rod
And saynt Austyn that brought crystendom
Into englonde by his grete wysedom
And the xii. apostles that fast gan wryte
Of our byleue and eke dyd endyte

There was saynt peter the noble pope
That dyd stande on the ryght syde
Of the hyghe auter in a ryche cope
Dame clennes and I dyd there abyde
And vp there came than at that tyde
Dame prayer with her syster charyte
And eke dame penytence with humylyte

Than came dame fayth anone to vs
With ryghtwysenes peas and dame mercy
With dame contrycyon gay and gloryous
Whiche after theym dyd not longe tary
And than came bede and eke saynt gregory
With saynt ambrose the noble doctour
Whiche of our fayth was good protectour

Than came the kynge of feruent loue
Led with argos in goodely wyse
Without whome he myght not remoue
From his sete by ryght prudent gyse
Who loueth argos wyll not deuyse
Nor yet begynne no maner of thynge
Without in his mynde he se good endynge

Also saynt Jerome the noble cardynall
Came vp to vs by humble reuerence
Whiche euermore was a good doctrynall
Prechynge to vs by vertuous influence
With exhortacyon of dyuyne complacence
And than foure byshoppes in grete dygnyte
Ryght connynge cernynge vnto the deyte

On hym wayted by grete dylygence
And neuer dyd forsake his company
But hym obeyed by good experyence
And from his cõmaundement dyd not vary
But in the chapell they dyd there tary
And than saynt Jerome wente to the kynge
Of feruent loue vnto hym saynge

O amyable kynge sealour of debate
O ioyner of vertue and well of vnyte
O royall emperour o souerayne estate
O messenger of feruent amyte
O feruent dart of cordyall pyyuyte
Here is your doughter fayre dame clennes
That must be maryed with good tryghtwysenes

Unto vertue the louely knyght
Whiche the batayle now hath won
By dame sapyence helpe and myght
Of the foule thre heeded dragon
This maryage by me shall be don
Go ye now streyght into your tabernacle
Whiche is to you moost propre habytacle

Than the souerayne kynge to hym dyd call
Dame fayth dyscrecyon and dame sapyence
With dame contrycyon & charyte withall
And eke dame mercy and dame penytence
Unto theym saynge ye haue intelygence
That this daye clennes my doughter dere
Shall be maryed to vertue that ye se here

Than they dyde all come vnto me
With dame peas and dame grace
And after theym came dame virgynyte
Whiche in her armes dyd me enbrace
Saynge that I was to her grete solace
Gyuynge me vnto my good maryage
A gowne of syluer for grete aparage

She gaue an other of the same
Unto dame clennes puttynge it one
Upon her back withouten blame
After whiche Clennes wente anone
Unto her fader her selfe alone
And I with saynt Jerome dyd there tary
To wed dame Clennes that noble lady

And all the ladyes with meke contenence
Stode on a rewe beside the closette
Of Clennes fader without relysshence
Whiche hanged was gayly with blue veluet
And with perles & rubyes rychely set
Than forth came Clennes with two aungels led
Whiche theyr golden wynges abrode dyd spred

Dame grace after her bare vp her trayn
And .xv. ladyes her dyd enlue
Fyrst went dame humylyte certayn
And after her than dyd purlue
Dame fayth in ſtablenes ſo true
Ledynge with her the fayre dame peale
That welth and ryches doth well encreale

Than went dame reaſon with perleueraūce
And than dame mercy with contricyon
And than exerſyce with remembraunce
After whome went dame reſtytucyon
With dame prayer and dame confeſſyon
And dame charyte with obedyence
And after theym came fayre dame abſtynence

Saynt Jerome dyd make there contynuacyon
Of dame Clennes and me in matrimonye
With heuenly wordes and vertuous faſhyon
And aungels came downe from heuen hye
As ſaynt Mychell with gabryell & the gerachye
To helpe ſaynt peter the maſſe to ſynge
The organs went and the bellys dyd rynge

My penne for feblenes may not now wryte
Nor my tonge for domnes may not expreſſe
Nor my mynde for negligence may not endyte
Of the aungelycall Joye and ſwete gladneſſe
That I ſawe there without heuynelle
And whan this weddynge holy was fynyſſhed
The aungels than to heuen vanyſſhed

Than downe I went in to the hall
Where ordeyned was by grete solempnyte
A dyner of vertue moost celestyall
To whiche came my wyf full of benygnyte
On the one syde led by good auctoryte
With saynt Edmond the noble kynge
And martyr whiche dyd her downe brynge

And she was led on the other syde
With saynt Edward the kynge and confessour
And so bytwene theym wente this bryde
To whom all the ladyes made grete honour
As alway seruynge her without errour
And a lytell whyle anone after her
Ergos brought downe her noble fader

The kynge of loue than sat hym downe
At the table for that tyme to ette
Caulynge dame Clennes for her renowne
On his one syde than for to be sette
And I on the other without ony lette
And besyde me sappyence and dyscrecyon
And than by theym sat dame contrycyon

Than sate saynt Edwarde with byrgynyte
And afore hym sate dame obedyence
Saynt Edmond and dame charyte
And than dame prayer with dame abstynence
And than dame fayth shynynge in excellence
With saynt Jerome and saynt Austeyn
And than saynt gregory without dysdeyn

There was two aungels holdynge fast
The table cloth at euery ende
Knelynge downe humbly and stedfast
Whole seruyce no man coude amende
Other there were that dyd entende
Us for to serue with theyr grete dylygence
That in theym founde coude be no neglygence

There dyd saynt Peter by grete holynes
Serue vs of our swete lordes body
Fyrst he serued the fader of clennes
And after that he serued her shortly
With charyte fayth and dame mercy
And I with discrecyon and dame sapyence
Of saynt Peter was serued with grete indulgence

So dame obedyence with contrycyon
With saynt Edwarde and virgynyte
In lykewyse were serued without corrupcyon
And saynt Edmond with dame charyte
And saynt Jerome with dame humylyte
With saynt austyn and saynt gregory
What nede I lenger of theym specyfy

This was a feest moost swete and precyous
To fede the soule with dyuyne comfort
This was a mete moost dere and glorious
That causeth all man for to resorte
To sempyternall lyfe and comforte
Than saynt ambrose beynge dyuyne
After our mete gaue vs good wyne

By this tyme was .lx. yere olde
And desyred for to lyue in peace
For I began to growe two folde
And my feblenes dyde sore encreace
For nature her strength than dyd leace
Wherfore after this ghoostly fest
I thought with my wyfe to abyde in rest

And I to her sayd with louynge chere
O my swete spouse moost fayre and beauteous
To me euer ryght leefe and dere
Where is your lande that is solacyous
Ye shewyd me of your gardeyn glorious
Unto whiche now fayne wolde I go
There for to dwell and you also

Syr she sayd the aungell raphaell
Shall with these martyrs & noble confessours
Bryngе you thyder with theym to dwell
Where ye shall see all your progenytours
With many sayntes and glorious auctours
This lande is heuen that to vs longeth
As our euydence the gospell telleth

Than came my fader in lawe to vs
Saynge by ryght I dyd combynd
Clennes my doughter with vertue precyous
And you must I loue by naturell kynde
For on you now is all my mynde
Afore hym I kyst my wyfe moost swetely
For we loued to gyder hote and truely

Than came my good aungell to me
Caulynge me with hym for to go
With clennes my wyke wher I dyd se
The paynes of hell full of grete wo
There was the dragon that I dyd slo
Bounde with chaynes in fyer infynall
With the seuen dedely synnes in generall

Than my good aungell to me sayd
If ye had loued dame sensualyte
The whiche with you dyd make a brayde
Ye had ben dampned by ryght and equyte
In to this pytte full of all iniquyte
Wherfore thanke god that sent you wysedome
Suche deedly perylles for to ouercome

Also the lady with the cup of golde
Is here condempned for her grete pryde
In endeles payne both hote and colde
Where in for synne she shall abyde
This is a dongeon longe and wyde
Made for theym that do synne dedely
And of cryst Jhesu wyll axe no mercy

This is a place full of all derkenes
Wherin be serpentes foull and odyous
This is a place of mortall heuynes
Where I sawe deuyles blacke and tedyous
Dampned soules turmented with hokes rygorous
This is the vppermoost parte of hell
In whiche paynyms dampned do dwell

For as moche as they lacked instruccyon
For to be leue in god omnypotent
They haue deserued the lesse correccyon
Yet theyr payne haue none extinguysshement
For they are dampned by true sentyment
For theyr byleue and fals idolatry
That made theyr goddes of mars & mercury

Than went we doume to an other baute
Where Jewes lay in grete paynes stronge
Whome deuylles tourmented by grete assaute
Drawynge theym with hokes a longe
For theyr opynyon so fals and wronge
Whiche byleued not in the natyuyte
Of Jhesu cryst and the bytygyn Mare

Nor yet that he dyd suffre passyon
Bothe for theym and all mankynde
Nother yet of his resurrectyon
In theyr byleue they are so blynde
Yet as in bokes wryten we do fynde
That they haue ben taught many a tyme
For to forsake theyr owne fals cryme

Than went we downe to a depper bale
Where crysten soules dyd weppe & crye
In grete sorowe payne and bale
Brennynge in fyer mooste hote and drye
And some in Jce ryght depe dyd lye
For to expresse it is impossyble
The paynes there they are so horryble

Thele crysten men knowe goddes lawe
And euery daye had informacyon
From deuelysshe werkes theym to withdrawe
That they sholde not fall in dampnacyon
Yet wyll they not make sequestracyon
Of goddes cõmaundement but syn deedly
Therfore here are they dampned ryght wyley

And thou haddest set thy delectacyon
In flesshely pleasure and vayne glory
Thou haddest ben here without saluacyon
Without thou of god had axed mercy
Who that it axeth shall haue it truely
Yf he be contryt and do repent
That he his lyfe in yll hath spent

This place sythens it is moost heuy
Moost derke and moost ferre from lyghtnes
As philosophers affirme by astronomy
Is in the myddes of the erthe douteles
That is a place of dyssolate derkenes
Wherfore by reason it must nedes be sette
In the myddes of the erthe both longe & grette

Capitulum.xliii

My good aungell by his grete vertue
Shewed me all this in a shorte space
And after hym I dyd than pursue
With my wyfe vnto the fayre place
That we came fro full of all solace
Where was my fader in the company
Of many sayntes that dyd there tary

My wyfe and me than for to bynge
To the place of eternall glory
With heuenly tewnes ſweetely ſyngynge
That theym to here it was grete melody
More than ony tonge can ſpecyfy
This was theyr ſonge ſo ſwete and glorious
That they dyd ſynge with voyce ſo vertuous

O celeſtyall kynge one two and thre
All people prayſe the god and lorde
Whiche art in heuen o noble trynyte
Whoſe royall power and myſerycorde
Confermed is by thyn hye accorde
On vs with trouth for to endure
Withouten ende as we are ſure

Glory be to the fader almyghty
And to the ſone and to the holy ghooſt
Thre perſones and one god truely
Whoſe power neuer can be looſt
For he is lorde of myghtes mooſt
And ſo hath ben without begynnynge
And euer ſhall be without endynge

Whan we were in the ayre of aſure
There dyd vs mete the noble Jerarchy
As Cherubyn and Seraphyn ſo pure
With other aungels in theyr company
That dyd proclayme & ſynge on hye
With voyce inlacyat mooſt melodyous
To god aboue Sanctus ſanctus ſanctus

There dyd I se the planettes seuen
Moue in ordre by alteracyon
To meruelous for me to neuen
For they sealled not theyr operacyon
Some allended some made declynacyon
Entrynge theyr houses of the.xii.synes
Some indyrectly and some by dyrecte lynes

To heuen we styed a place moost glorryous
Where that we dyd beholde the deyte
With insaciable contenaunce moost desyrous
And truely than the more that we
Dyd loke vpon his souerayne beaute
The more our desyre dyd encreace
This is a Joye that shall not seace

This is a regyon moost full of swetnes
This is a realme of delectacyon
This is a lande of infenyte gladnes
Without ony stormy tribulacyon
This place is of eterne saluacyon
Where aungels and sayntes for theyr solace
Euermore do loke on goddes face

What sholde I wryte thynges of dyuynyte
Or endyght of suche maters hye
Sythen it no thynge longeth to my faculte
Therfore of it I wyll not lenger tarye
For fere that I in it sholde varye
And by cause that trouth shall be my mede
I wyll now leue and take me to my crede

So vertue and clennes by good ryght
Truely in maryage ioyned must be
For they loue to gyder with all theye myght
Without dyscencyon or duplycyte
And they both are alway in vnyte
To whome heuen by tayll generall
Entayled is by a dede memoryall

Now are they to gyder to heuen gone
There for to dwell in Joye eternall
Where that there is the heuenly trone
Of our sauyour Jhesu deere & spercyall
Who that hym loueth truely ouer all
Ledynge his lyfe with vertue and clennes
Shall come vnto the glory endeles

But in the fynysshynge of my mater
To god the maker of all thynge
Deuoutely now I make my prayer
To sauke kynge Henry our ryghtfull kynge
From all treason and dolefull morynge
And for to maynteyn the grete honour
Of this swete rede rose so fayre a colour

This floure was kepte ryght longe in close
Amonge the leuys holsom and sote
And regally sprange and arose
Out of the noble stokke and rote
Of the rede rose tre to be our bote
After our bale sente by grete grace
On vs to reygne by ryght longe space

O lorde god what Joye was this
Unto his moder so good and gracyous
Whan that she sawe her sone I wys
Of his ennemys to be so vyctoryous
It caused her to be moost Joyous
And yet there of no wonder why
For he was ryght longe from her truely

A ioyfull metynge than bytwene
The moder and the sone so dere
A daye of gladnes bryght and shene
Fressher than phebus myddaye spere
Whan her sone to vs dyd appere
He dyd vs lyght with his pure bemys
Quenchynge of mars the fyrous lemys

O heuenly kynge o eternall emperoure
O thre persons and one god equall
I praye the to kepe from all doloure
This moder with her sone in specyall
With all theyr noble buddes in generall
And laude be to the that dyd enhaunce
Hym to his ryght and propre herytaunce

The whyte rose that w̄ tempestes troublous
Aualed was and ebe blowen asyde
The reed rose fortyfyed and made delycyous
It pleased god for hym so to prouyde
That his redolent buddes shall not slyde
But euer encrease and be vyctoryous
Of fatall brerys whiche be contraryous

Thus god by grace dyd well combyne
The rede rose and the whyte in maryage
Beynge oned ryght clere doth shyne
In all clennes and vertuous courage
Of whose ryght and royall lynage
Pryncē Henry is sprynge our kynge to be
After his fader by ryght good equyte

O noble pryncē Henry our secounde treasure
Surmontynge in vertue & myrrour of beaute
O geme of gentylnes & lanterne of plasure
O rubycound blossome and sterre of humylyte
O famous bud full of benygnyte
I pray to god well for to encreale
your hyghe estate in rest and peale

O thoughfull hert for lack of connynge
Now layde to slepe this longe wynters nyght
Ryse vp agayne loke on the shynynge
Of fayre lucyna clere and bryght
Beholde eke mercury with his fayre lyght
Castynge adoune his stremys mery
It may well glad thyn emyspery

O gower fountayne moost aromatyke
I the now take for to depure
My rudnes with thy lusty retoryke
And also I nys as I am sure
My mayster Chaucers to take the cure
Of my penne for he was expert
In eloquent termes subtyll and couert

Where is now lydgate flourynge in sentence
That shold my mynde forge to endyte
After the termes of famous eloquence
And strength my penne well for to wryte
With maters freshe of pure delyte
They can not helpe me there is no remedy
But for to praye to god almyghty

For to dystyll the dewe of influence
Upon my brayn so dull and rude
And to enlumyn me with his sapyence
That I my rudnes may exclude
And in my mater well to conclude
Unto thy pleasure and to the reders all
To whome I excuse me now in generall

Explicit exemplum virtutis

¶ Here beginneth a lytel treatyse that she Weth ho W euery man & Woman ought to faste and absteyne them from flesshe on ye Wednesday.